1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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should be accessible to her brothers-in-law. Instances occur, in which the husband is much younger than his wife, who, until he has reached maturity, cohabits with her paternal aunt's son, or some one whom she may have a fancy for. The marriage ceremony of the Udayas is carried out on an elaborate scale, and is based on the type of ceremonial which is carried out by some castes in the plains. Before dawn on the marriage day, the brothers and cousins of the bridegroom go, accompanied by some Udayas and the Kota band, to the forest, whence they bring two sticks of *Mimusops hexandra*, to do duty as the milk-posts. The early hour is selected, to avoid the chance of coming across inauspicious objects. The sticks should be cut off the tree at a single stroke of the bill-hook, and they may not be laid flat on the ground, but placed on a blanket spread thereon. The Udayas, who joined in the procession, collect twelve posts of *Mimusops* as supports for the marriage booth (pandal). In front of the house, which is to be the scene of the wedding, two pits are dug, into which cow-dung water is poured. The pūjāri does pūja to the milk-posts by offering sugar-cane, jaggery (crude sugar), etc., and ties two threads thereto. The posts are then placed in the pits by five people—the parents of the bridal couple and the priest. The booth, and dais or enclosure, are then erected close to the milk-posts. On the second day, the bridegroom's party, attended by Kota musicians, dressed up in dancing costume, go to the house of the bride, where a feast is held. The bride then salutes a lamp, and prostrates herself at the feet of her parents, who bless her, saying "May your body and hands soon be filled (*i.e.*, may you have a child), and may your life be prosperous." The bride is taken in procession to the house of the bridegroom,

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843 ance, divorce can only be obtained through the decree
(585) of the panchāyat (tribal council). Moreover, if it has not
(586) been performed, a man cannot claim the paternity of the child. The ceremony is called kanni kattodu or kanni hākodu (thread tying or throwing). The husband and wife are seated in the midst of those who have assembled for the occasion, and the former asks his father-in-law whether he may throw the thread round his wife's neck, and, having received permission, proceeds to do so. If he gets the thread, which must have no knots in it, entangled in the woman's bunch of hair (kondai), which is made large for the occasion by the addition of false
(783) hair, he is fined three rupees. On the day of the ceremony, the man and his wife are supposed to be under pollution, and sit in the verandah to receive presents. The mats used by them for sleeping on are cleaned on the following morning, and they get rid of the pollution by bathing.

843 A first confinement must not take place within the
846 house, and the verandah is converted into a lying-in
783 chamber, from which the woman is, after delivery,
821 removed to the outer apartment, where she remains till she is free from pollution by catching sight of the crescent moon. If a woman has been delivered at her
846 father's house, she returns to the home of her husband
(777) within a month of the birth of the child on an auspicious
851 day. On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old man standing by a lamp within the milk-house. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced. All the relations take up a little of the milk and rice, and touch the tongue of the baby with them.

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path between the priest's home and the temple, or go beyond the territorial boundary of her own village. She must not collect dry firewood, lest she become barren. She must not face the village priest; so that when he starts out from his home for the temple he shouts "hu:hu:" (or rings a handbell if it is a Lingayat village) as a warning to *all* menstruating women to hide themselves. The girl must cook her own food while she is in seclusion, and cannot be supplied with it already cooked from her own home. Instead, every household in the village should give the girl a small amount of rice, chili, salt, pulse, millet flour or vegetables. Such gifts are not to be returned later in equal measurs.

3.12. A girl's first seclusion is for no fixed period. She can re-enter her home only on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, but it must be either the first day after the new moon or else whichever of these three days falls most closely before the full moon. Although this is the Badaga custom, today one out of five girls would instead go to the nearest town and, in Tamilian fashion, consult an astrologer as to the most auspicious day for re-entering the house. On that day she bathes outside the house, puts on a set of totally new clothes, and cuts her nails with a small knife. Along with the other new clothes she is given the traditional headcloth, which she ties over her head before entering the home or which is replaced by the end of a *sa:ri* held over her head, if she has adopted that mode of dress (Hockings 1979a). Only after sunset, when she can see stars, does the girl cross the threshold, doing so with the right, auspicious foot first. It is reported that she used to be led up to the threshold by five elderly women (Francis 1908: 131). Once inside she goes to the doorway that joins the two main rooms, kneels down, and touches her head to the floor. By this gesture she acknowledges that the further room, the *ogamane*, is a sacred place which she will never pollute by her menses. As the girl bows down, older people in that house say a prayer. She then stands and bows her head to the hand of the oldest person in the house, and then to all other relatives present. Next, accompanied by another girl of similar age such as a sister, she goes round the village and bows in the same manner to all people older than herself. On that occasion each household must offer her something to eat as a symbol of their mutual kinship. Generally the girl is given milk, but in a large village she may only taste a drop of that milk because she could not drink so much. And although the village may be large, the bowing cannot be postponed

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month, or else have a difficult delivery during the ninth month and produce a lean, unhealthy baby. 843

If the woman's eyes turn red, she gets diarrhoea, feels uneasy, and her lips are itchy, these signs indicate that she indeed has too much "heat" in the body, and that she is not having food regularly or in enough quantity. If there is a lot of "heat" she will have heartburn before or after meals, and will cough; but the excess "heat" can only be noticed by any of these signs, not by feeling the actual temperature of the body.

The "heat" can be reduced by feeding the patient buttermilk or butter. In an extreme case she can be given a special mixture. (272) Lime juice is put in a pot, and buffalo milk is milked directly from the animal onto the juice, and then drunk immediately. (Cow's milk can be used instead, but is not so effective.) This drink is given to her every morning for two or three weeks, before she takes any food.

In the fourth, sixth and seventh months the woman can be carefree. In even numbered months, the fourth, sixth and eighth, she may cross the hamlet boundary and visit her father's house, provided she does not stay there overnight. In odd-numbered months, the fifth, seventh and ninth, she can stay there overnight.

4.4. At an odd-numbered month, generally the fifth or seventh month of a girl's first pregnancy only, she and her husband go through a ceremony that confirms their marriage. This occurs on a day after the new moon and before the full moon; it must be an auspicious day—a Monday, Friday, Wednesday or Sunday, in that order of preference. Although no mention is made of the pregnancy, everyone is aware that it has led to a stable marriage and the woman is no longer a mere servant of the man: "For the woman without children there is no house; for the man without an ox there is no place" (Verghese 1963: 422). Hence the ceremony: 843 585 851 (777) (581) (539)

> . . . it seals the marriage contract, and, after its performance, divorce can only be obtained through the decree of the panchāyat (tribal council). Moreover, if it has not been performed, a man cannot claim the paternity of the child . . . The husband and wife are seated in the midst of those assembled . . . and the former asks his father-in-law whether he may throw the thread round his wife's neck, and, having received permission, proceeds to do so . . . On the day of the ceremony, the man

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village by this time, and there her relatives give her sweets, show her beautiful views, and if possible beautiful dresses. She has to be careful lest too many sweets lead to worms in her stomach or in her newborn child. It is not unusual for sexual relations to occur in the latter part of a pregnancy. Because of the dangers just stated, it does not occur in the fifth or eighth month, lest the woman miscarry. In the eighth or ninth month, however, the girl generally has a strong sexual desire, and in the last month the couple may discretely have intercourse. This is done with care: they lie on their sides or adopt some other position so that no weight is placed on the womb. This intercourse is said to satisfy the woman and ensure that she has no problem with the delivery. One old therapist used to advise when a delivery was late that the couple should have intercourse, and then delivery would follow within a day or two.

When the confinement is imminent, the woman moves back to her father's house, especially if it is her first pregnancy, because she will get better treatment there. While she is there everyone in the hamlet should feed her one meal. For subsequent births she may be allowed to remain at her husband's house, and may use the outer room for her confinement (Thurston 1909 : 109). For the first confinement, however, she is taken to her father's house even if she does not want to go.

Birth

4.6. Women generally deliver after the ninth month is completed, but some do so 10-15 days before this, others 10-15 days after. There may even be successful births at the end of the tenth month, generally in a subsequent delivery, not a woman's first. Such a birth, however, is probably accounted for by the pregnancy in fact having started only at the month following that which is being counted from. It is recognized that conception could have occurred on any day up to the one when the last menses was expected but failed to appear. Otherwise when a birth is a long time overdue it usually means there will be twins. One of these is always weak, and it needs the extra time to develop properly.

Some 40-50 per cent of women give birth a day or two before the new moon or the full moon; so they must be careful as the new moon and the full moon approach. Sometimes they give birth

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in the days immediately after the new or full moon. It is believed that a male birth on the night of the full moon or the next day is auspicious, but if on the day of the new moon it is more inauspicious than on any other day (Reclus 1885: 203). This belief is enshrined in the saying, "The boy born on the new moon day is bad; the girl born on the full moon day is bad." (For purposes of Badaga ritual practice, and this particular belief too, a sunset ends one day and is the beginning of the next.) A birth coming on a day between the new and the full moon is lucky; whereas one between the full and the new moon is unlucky. It is exceptionally auspicious if a *son* is born at the full moon, and luckier still if this happens to be the mother's eighth delivery (though not necessarily her eighth live birth). Under these circumstances the family will "prosper like a king's." If on the other hand it is a girl who is born at the new moon, or at her mother's eighth delivery, it is then believed that the family the child marries into will prosper, and so many will want to marry her.

The unfortunate boy born on the day of the new moon is called Tippa ; and a girl born at the full moon is similarly Tippe. As soon as such an unlucky child has been born it is put into an old winnow and dragged a few inches across the floor. The name Tippa means "rubbish dump," and this act symbolizes throwing the baby away as rubbish: afterwards the inauspicious birth will not have a bad effect on the family. Later, at its naming ceremony, the child will be given two names so that it does not have to be called by this distasteful one.

4.7. Long ago in cases of very difficult labour Badaga midwives performed Caesarean operations, using the small knife that is intended for severing the umbilicus. I could not ascertain whether the wound was stitched up afterwards: in those times people did not care very much whether the mother died, provided the child was born and remained alive. Now the opposite attitude prevails. Some midwives still know how to reach into a womb and remove a dead foetus. It should be noted that if a pregnant woman dies the foetus must be cut out before disposal of the mother's corpse: from this unfortunate custom some basic surgical knowledge was undoubtedly gleaned in the past.

Nowadays if a woman is having a particularly difficult labour a special mixture is prepared for her. Items used in this include dried ginger, pepper, cumin, clove, crude sugar, coffee powder,

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846 nine or 15 days she might begin to work in the house again (Jagor 801 1876: 199). Earlier yet, for her first birth, a woman would stay in 851 the pollution hut until the next waning of the moon. In later con- 783 finements she would remain in the hut for only three days (Birch 1838: 104). The mother of twins, even if poor, should however 845 stay at home looking after them for at least three months, with- 854 out doing any outside work.

"A girl who has delivered is a good sight; a field with good 846 crops is a good sight," according to one proverb. Within a month [539] of the birth, on an auspicious day, mother and child return to her husband's house. The party must number (including both of them) [777] at least five persons, and must be of an odd number unless it ex- [801] ceeds 21.

> 846 On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old 788 man standing by a lamp within the milk-house. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced. All the relations take up a little of the rice and milk, and touch the tongue of the baby with them. (Thurston 1909:109)

843 If a woman becomes pregnant for the twentieth time by the same 585 husband (a previous marriage does not count), then, whether all 851 the offspring are living or not, the couple go right through the wedding and seventh-month-of-pregnancy ceremonies again. These are performed on a lavish scale, even if the husband has to borrow substantially.

The Form and Sex of the Child

858 4.14. A proverb asks, "If a mother gives birth to a male child, 539 will the father object to it?" Obviously he will not, since it is a blessing to the family (Verghese 1963: 420). The same idea is also expressed thus: "By delivering a son she is like a prima donna standing on a vantage point and calling out;" or "The man who has begotten a son and the man who has planted a coconut [tree] will not spoil." Another saying puts it quite succinctly: "A strong boy, a weak girl;" and yet another emphasizes that girl babies are not much wanted: "Even though you repeatedly tell her, she is

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Thurston (1909). We will simply offer a listing of what the ceremonies are, in chronological order, and will also describe those nonceremonial childhood events which alter the surface of the human body in some way, and hence are of some relevance to an account of Badaga health and illness.

(*a*) *Birth*. The only ceremonial aspect at delivery is a magical act to ward off any evil influence. It is described in detail above (4.11).

(*b*) *Naming*. This important ceremony makes the child into a social being, and must be performed before the fortieth day of life. Should it die before the ceremony the child's corpse is buried without a formal funeral (Jagor 1876: 199; Thurston 1909: 110).

(*c*) *Head Shaving*. This is usually combined with the ear boring, and should occur within about a year of the child's birth, but after the naming ceremony. The shaving is now done with a razor but formerly used a fragment of bottle glass (Thurston 1909: 110). Children should have a second complete shave at any time from two weeks to a year afterwards, but with no further ceremony, before their hair is allowed to grow long.

(*d*) *Ear Boring*. Sometimes this used to be combined with the naming ceremony (Jagor 1876: 199), but otherwise it occurs during a child's first year. It should follow the shaving. An earring is simply touched to the child's ear, but several years later the lobes will be punctured without any further ceremony, using the point of an earring for this (Rhiem 1900: 503).

(*e*) *First Tooth Ceremony*. Generally all babies get their lower teeth first, but in the case of a boy there will be a small ceremony if he gets teeth in the *upper* jaw first.

(*f*) *School*. There is no ceremony for when a child starts school, but the parents select an auspicious day for this and distribute sweets to the new classmates.

(*g*) *Nostril Piercing*. This is done in a girl's ninth, eleventh or thirteenth year on an auspicious day, but without any ceremony. In earlier times it was essential for a girl to have a nose-ring before she got married. Since about 1955 the practice has stopped altogether, and before that it was often combined with a girl's tattooing.

(*h*) *Tattooing*. Today the tattooing of girls is going out of fashion, and few of the younger women are so marked. A century ago however all women were tattooed on the forehead, and Jagor illustrates

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from Burliya:r.

The cure for this ailment should preferably begin on the auspicious days Friday, Sunday or Tuesday. If the need is urgent it can also start on a Monday or a Wednesday; but never a Thursday or Saturday. The curing is done every night for at least three days, and it may continue till the fifth, seventh, ninth or eleventh day from the start. Usually the cure is done twice nightly; but if the case is very serious it will be done three times a night, at about 1900 hrs., midnight, and 0500 hrs. The curing can begin right after sunset, but it is generally started later, after supper. It is done at night because the house must remain closed throughout, including all windows.

When the therapist brings all the medical materials he has collected, he hides them somewhere in the bus nearby rather than bring them straight to the patient's house. These materials must not be brought near children, not because the children are impure, but because some of the plants are probably poisonous and the Indian willow is hallucinogenic.

Before he starts in the evening the women clean the house and sprinkle liquid cowdung on the floor. If there is any meat in the house it should be taken out before the cleaning begins. As the sickness is caused by a god, the people present while it is being treated must be pure. For this reason no women are allowed to stay, except those who ceased menstruation at least 12 years before. No children under 18 are allowed to stay either, "because they may be affected by some bad smell," and contract the disease. None of the men present should smoke during the night either. One of them may be allowed to go into the bathroom and urinate or smoke, but only if his need is great.

Only when all the women and children have left for the night does the therapist go and bring the hidden plants into the house. The door is then shut behind him, and must not be opened again

nely" there. It is recognized that a girl may feign possession, perhaps to gain attention, perhaps to rush off wildly into the woods followed by a young man intent on taking care of her desires while there.

Ghosts are ultimately driven out either by throwing the host person bodily into a river, or by inducing the ghost into a lock of her hair, which is then cut off and either nailed to a tree or corked carefully into a bottle and buried away from the village so that it cannot escape again. The following cases offer a fair range of Badaga exorcism practices.

8.3. CASE 1. In 1962 a boy, aged 18, failed the S.S.L.C. examination and committed suicide by hanging himself. He did this because he had told all his friends he would certainly pass, and so could not face them.

Another man and his 16-year-old wife slept in a separate house from that of the man's parents. One night when they were on the way to this house the ghost of the suicide entered the girl. He was not related to her, but was in a distant "sister's husband" relationship to her husband. A month after the ghost got into her, it became active.

In May 1963, the ghost was driven out by a Badaga exorcist from another village. He is reputed to know spells strong enough to kill people, and some strong enough to remove curses laid on by other magicians. In the present case, once the ghost became active in the girl, she went into a trance and claimed to be this person or that; always a male, though. It was because the people thought she was feigning possession and would not believe her that her husband brought the exorcist. At the first seance he told her she was bluffing; and so then while in a trance she identified some of the people present, even though she was newly married to this village and might not have known everyone there. After that the people believed she had a ghost, and the ghost "started telling the truth."

Every night for a week the exorcist held a seance with her, for which he came from his village especially. A crowd of some 50 or 60 villagers, including the girl's close relatives, was always present. These people came because it is the customary thing to do, rather than because they were curious. During the seance they sang folksongs, but not hymns; and on the last day they were thanked for coming and singing. The exorcist gets little for his work: on the last evening he is usually given a loincloth and a cloak. Each seance began around 2200 hrs., and lasted for two or three hours. It was

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Other Specialists

759 10.8. Midwives and exorcists are specialists, of course, but they
791 differ in status. The midwife deals in the pollution of blood, and
462 is always a female; the exorcist deals in the danger that spirits
[554] bring, and is invariably a male. It is thus in accordance with Hindu —and Badaga—thinking that the exorcist ranks higher and the midwife lower in esteem than the more general therapist, whether male or female: one handles supernatural power, the other female pollution.

759 Aside from these categories, however, there are other specialists who are known for their ability to handle particular types of malady. In the foregoing chapters we have encountered three instances of such people. One was a woman, the grandmother of my informant M. N. Thesingh. At the time of her death in 1941 she
759 had treated "nearly a thousand cases" of infertility in women, and
757 found only half-a-dozen of these to be really barren women. For the rest, she prepared a medicine out of three or four different plants.
842 What they were was a secret she took with her to the grave, for she thought that if she taught the medicine to anyone else it would not work well for either of them. She even told her grandson, "You must discover the technique for yourself." He took this to mean that he should spy on her, and once did so. She used to get up at about five in the morning, wash, and then go out to the fields or the forest. On reaching the spot where the necessary plants grew, she looked around till she saw what she wanted; then, with the plant in front of her, she stood facing the east, her palms touching each other as she prayed. Then she sat cross-legged on the ground at that spot and removed a silver ring from the middle finger of the right hand. This she placed on the plant that was in front of her, prayed again, then replaced the ring and picked the plant. She explained later that the ring was an offering to God ; but her grandson failed to discover the identity of the plants.

759 One case that is remembered by him illustrates the assurance with which this woman treated her patients. A 19-year old girl was
881 was brought from a very distant village, her problem being that
554 she had never menstruated (or had she, but was afraid to admit it for fear of being married?). She arrived on Wednesday, but the
[777] therapist (like her daughter-in-law Sithamma) refused to begin new treatment unless on a Tuesday, Friday or Sunday, which are auspicious days; so the girl had to wait.

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753 [827] [831]

illness. Sexual over-exertion can similarly make a young man incapacitated (cf. 3.10).

(*h*) The odour that follows on an act of coitus, or the "bad wind" that emanates from a corpse, or from a childbirth, are widely held to be responsible for illness and even death in unweaned infants.

753 164

(*i*) Some misfortunes, like bites, stings and burns, are caused by quite obvious external agents. What we would consider equally obvious cases of infection, however, may be considered by Badagas to have a more complicated causation ; as in the reported case of a woman with

753 164 797

> an extensive ulceration from the right arm pit to the right shoulder and to the right breast. It was full of black-headed maggots .... It seems she had been in this state for one and a half months in the village ... The rest of the crowd made most unkind remarks at her expense. Some said that it was on account of her bad life in a previous birth that she had to suffer thus. Her husband's brother said that I must either cure her soon or put her to a painless end .... I sprinkled into the deep ulcerated tissue a small quantity of chloro form, and the maggots fell dead in hundreds .... There followed an uneventful recovery ... (Ketti Medical Mission 1949: 4-5)

(The writer was of course an Indian doctor trained in scientific medicine.)

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(*j*) Depigmentation of the skin is caused by the supposed "bite of a blindworm."

[177]

(*k*) Nowadays a "germ theory" is not unknown, as for example in the explanation offered me for why teeth rot. Cleanliness of body is strongly approved of today.

[177]

(*l*) In the case of plague it is thought that mosquitoes carry the disease from rats to men. This modern-sounding but inaccurate theory probably arose from the publicity that surrounded the mosquito eradication programme on the lower slopes some year ago.

[177] [539]

(*m*) And finaliy there is a belief that bad luck and illness tend to repeat themselves for an individual: as a proverb puts it, "The very foot which is scarred will be hurt again."